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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0948
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0410
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0231
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0274
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1819
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2668
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4551
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCNFB/FBI WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KARACHI 000072

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: BALOCHISTAN - NATIONALIST PROVINCIAL OFFICIAL SHOT
BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS

REF: A. KARACHI 59
[1](#)B. KARACHI 42
[1](#)C. KARACHI 26
[1](#)D. KARACHI 18

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY CONSUL GENERAL STEPHEN FAKAN FOR REASONS 1
.4 b and d.

Summary:

[1](#)1. (SBU) A radical Islamic group and a new Baloch nationalist group have both claimed responsibility for the February 23 shooting of Balochistan's Provincial Secretary of Mines and Minerals Jan Mohammad Dashti. The terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed it shot Dashti, an intellectual and author, because he wrote a book considered by the group to be blasphemous. The previously unknown Baloch Gharib Perwar (Baloch Pro-Poor Group) claimed it attacked Dashti because he had sold Baloch land in Gwadar to the Pakistani army. Officials have not assigned responsibility to any party yet. The event and its aftermath have served to underscore Balochistan's increasingly complicated political situation.

Attack on Provincial Secretary of Mines and Minerals

[1](#)2. (SBU) On February 23, unknown assailants riding a motorcycle shot Balochistan Provincial Secretary of Mines and Minerals Jan Mohammad Dashti and his driver. Dashti was reportedly airlifted to a Karachi hospital, where he arrived in serious condition. He is a noted Baloch intellectual who has authored several books and is affiliated with the Baloch Nationalist Party (BNP)) Mengal.

Who Shot the Secretary?

[1](#)3. (C) Journalist Malik Siraj told Post that two groups have claimed responsibility for the attack. The first, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, is a Sunni terrorist organization that has publicly claimed credit for recent sectarian killings in Quetta (refs B, C). The other, Baloch Gharib Perwar (Baloch Pro-Poor Group), is the latest previously unknown Baloch group to claim credit for an act of violence (ref C). In claiming responsibility for the assault, the group accused Dashti of selling Baloch land in Gwadar to the army. (Note: Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, designated a terrorist organization by

both the USG and the GOP, has been linked to a number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, including the 1997 killing of four American oil workers in Karachi, the 2002 murder of Daniel Pearl, the 2002 killing of 11 French workers, and the 2002 International Church bombing in Islamabad. End comment.)

¶4. (C) Adding to the mix, Siraj theorized that the nationalist Baloch Student Organization (BSO) could have carried out the attack, since the group has accused Dashti of supporting the GOP. In contrast, Quetta Police Deputy Inspector General of Operations Wazir Khan Nasir opined that responsibility for the attack lay with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, since the caller claiming responsibility for the attack mentioned a book Dashti had written supposedly containing blasphemy as a motive.

¶5. (C) Predictably, BNP) Mengal Secretary General Habib Jalid accused the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI) of planning the attack. He said the GOP had targeted Dashti because of his position as Editor of the pro-Baloch nationalist newspaper Asaap. (Comment: Baloch nationalists routinely accuse GOP agencies of conspiring against them, without presenting evidence. End comment.)

Comment

¶6. (C) Officials have yet to assign blame for the attack on any particular organization. Sunni extremists could have targeted Dashti, an intellectual, well known for his

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outspoken views on religion. It is more probable, however, that a faction of one of the growing number of proclaimed Baloch nationalist groups may have orchestrated the attack, given their accusations of collusion with the GOP. Many nationalists felt betrayed when he joined the Pakistani government as a civil servant. In his position with the Balochistan Ministry of Mines and Minerals, Dashti oversees an issue at the heart of the Baloch insurgency) the province's natural resources. However, Quetta has become locked in a labyrinthine web of conspiracy theories that could make it difficult to ultimately discover who was really behind the attack.

FAKAN